



RETAINER INSTRUCTIONS – PHASE I RETENTION (Hawley Type Retainer)

CONGRATULATIONS on finishing your first phase of orthodontic treatment! **It is now your responsibility to keep your teeth straight and to maintain the correction we achieved with phase I orthodontics.** It is very important to wear your retainer(s) as instructed to keep your teeth nice and straight. After your braces are removed, your teeth are still a little bit loose, and generally take approximately 4-6 months to stabilize. As your baby teeth fall out and your permanent teeth start to erupt, your retainer may not fit well. It is important to wear your retainer as much as possible for as long as possible to preserve the correction we were able to achieve with phase I orthodontic treatment. We will continue to see you regularly during the phase I retention stage, and will adjust your retainer as much as possible so that you can wear it for as long as possible. When your retainer no longer fits due to the eruption of your permanent teeth, we may have you either replace your retainer or have you stop wearing it until you start your comprehensive orthodontic treatment with upper and lower braces (phase II). Please do not make the decision to stop wearing your retainer yourself – sometimes we need to replace it to prevent relapse. Wait for Dr. Hummert to evaluate you and to make that decision so that we can keep your teeth looking beautiful!

WEARING YOUR RETAINER(S): Right after your braces are taken off, it is important that you wear your retainer(s) **FULL TIME AT HOME for at least 4 months** (Approximately 12-14 hours per night). This means that you should have your retainer(s) in your mouth **ALL THE TIME** when you are at home. You should only take out your retainer(s) to eat, brush your teeth, play sports, and swim. We do not recommend wearing the retainer outside your home, unless you are away for more than 2 days, as this may lead to loss or breakage. Retainers must be worn **EXACTLY** as instructed. Be sure that they are placed firmly against your teeth and gums as you are shown. There may be a short period (one to three days) when you experience some soreness of the teeth, some difficulty in speaking, and excessive salivation. This will all get better with continuous wear and with time. If any sore spots develop on your gums, call the office for an adjustment. If the retainer(s) do not fit, please call and let us know immediately. Do not wait until your next appointment.

STORING YOUR RETAINER(S): When your retainer(s) are not in your mouth, you **MUST** put them in the case that is provided to you. **DO NOT** wrap your retainer(s) in a tissue or napkin, as this is how they can get thrown in the garbage. **DO NOT** place your retainer(s) in your pocket unless they are in the case, as this is how they can break. The case will protect your retainer(s) from getting broken. **If your retainer gets lost or broken, there is a fee to replace or repair it.**

CLEANING YOUR RETAINER(S): It is important to keep your retainer(s) clean. You should clean them at least once a day (in the morning when you take them out). We recommend that you soak your retainer(s) briefly (about 2-3 minutes) in 2% -3% hydrogen peroxide to disinfect them. You can also use RETAINER BRITE (sold on Amazon) and follow the instructions on the package. After disinfecting your retainers, you should brush them gently but **thoroughly** with a soft toothbrush under cold running water (**NO toothpaste**). Make sure to brush off ALL the plaque and debris off of your retainer – if you leave any plaque or debris on the retainer, it will calcify and be impossible to remove later. **DO NOT** boil, microwave, or put your retainer in the dishwasher!

THINGS TO AVOID: **DO NOT** wear your retainer(s) while eating, brushing, playing sports, or swimming. **DO NOT** wrap your retainer(s) in a tissue or napkin. **DO NOT** place the retainer(s) in your pockets unless they are in the case. **DO NOT** leave the retainer(s) in the reach of pets, because they love to chew them. **DO NOT** try to adjust the retainer(s) yourself – call us for an appointment for a retainer adjustment. **DO NOT** subject your retainer(s) to excessive heat, because they will melt.

RETAINER CHECKS: We will continue to see you periodically for retainer checks and monitor the eruption of your permanent teeth to decide when it will be best to start full treatment with upper and lower braces. **It is important for you to bring your retainer(s) to every retainer check appointment to be evaluated by the doctor.** Dr. Hummert will let you know how frequently you will need to wear your retainer(s), and will let you know when and if it is time for you to start wearing them only at night, or not at all. Please do not make this decision yourself. If your retainer is not fitting and you are not scheduled for an appointment within the next week, please call to make your appointment sooner – do not wait too long because the retainer may not be able to be adjusted to fit.

BREAKAGE: We have found from experience that retainers can last a long time when worn properly and when stored in their containers. However, they are delicate, and they cannot withstand rough handling, twisting or abuse, so please take good care of them. **If your retainer(s) get lost or are broken, call the office as soon as possible to have replacement(s) made. Do not wait – your teeth can shift at any time.** If your retainer(s) are lost, broken, or need to be replaced for any reason, there will be a charge to repair or replace them.

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